VOL. IV. Numb. 19.

The British Apollo:

OR,

Curious Amusements for the INGENIOUS.

Perform'd by a SOCIETY of GENTLEMEN.

From Monday May 7th. to Wednesday May 9th. 1711.

GENTLEMEN,

Q. THAT *Ignorance is the Mother of Devotion is, I think, though not universally, yet very often a true Maxim; for whoever observes the Temper and Disposition of many People towards Piety will find that it is generally the Effect of a credulous Simplicity, and that they are not inclined to it from Principles of Understanding and a sincere Love of Truth. For this Reason I cannot be an Enemy to those pious Frauds that have been often practiced with good Success by the Church of* Rome *upon her People, as by the pretended sweating and moving of Images, Spurious Reliques of Saints, feigned Legends of Miracles and Apparitions of Saints and the like, by which Arts many have been brought over to the Practice of Devotion, upon whom all real and rational Arguments had been ineffectual. Now, my Question is, whether the practice of such Frauds with a Design to captivate Men to Piety be any Offence against God? and if it is not, why may not we hope for the same Success from them in the Church of* England *if put in Practice, as they have had in the Church of* Rome?

A. Without determining any Thing concerning the Lawfulness of pious Frauds, it is sufficient to observe that we cannot promise to our selves any great Success from them, but rather the contrary in this Age that abounds so much with free Thinkers, who wou'd take a Pleasure in detecting such Frauds and weakening the Force of Religion thereby, by insinuating that the whole of it is in like manner a Cheat. To this we add, That Religion has no need of such Arts to procure its Reception in the Minds of Men: It is a Soil of itself productive of the Fruits of Righteousness of its own native Heat and Strength. Let but Men be earnestly called to a serious Attendance to those mighty Arguments wrapt up in the Life, Miracles, Death and Resurrection of our Lord, the Rewards of Virtue proposed in Scripture greater than their Thoughts can conceive, the Certainty and Severity of a Judgment to come, the apparent Folly of every sinful Choice, and the great Correspondence of all the Duties incumbent on us to the natural Notions we have of what is fit and just; and we shall find these consecrated Weapons of infinite more Force against the Powers of Darkness than all the Wit and Subtilty of Man can supply us with. Besides how vain must it needs be to pretend to be wiser than God, or to cast about for other Instruments to advance his Worship, than those his infinite Wisdom has supplied us with? How rash and impious to think his Interest might be managed with greater Advantage, if he wou'd be advised by us, and not trust it wholly with those unpromising Means of his own Appointment?

Q. Gentlemen, *The modern Astronomers observe, that when the Planet* Venus *begins its Retrogression from the Sun towards the East, and when its Elongation from the Sun is but very small, it is bigger than usual; but when it advances towards the Sun, and its Elongation from it is again but small, it is less. On the contrary, when it departs from the Sun towards the West, it is observed to be less; but when again it approaches towards the Sun, it is bigger. This is so strange a* Phænomenon *that it well deserves your examining into the Reason of it.*

A. This *Phænomenon* is both a Proof and a necessary Consequence of *Venus*'s being an inferior Planet to the Earth, and having the Sun for the Center of its Orbit; and also of its being of a Spherical Figure, an opake Body, and illuminated by the Sun as our Earth is. For from these Considerations it necessarily follows, that that Hemisphere of the Planet which is obverted towards the Sun will be enlightened by it, but the contrary one will be dark. And since one of its Hemispheres is always obverted toward the Earth, if we consider what Part of it must be enlightened in its various Position with Respect to the Sun, and what Part with Respect to the Earth moving also in its Orbit; it is manifest that when *Venus* is most retrograde and therefore nearest to us it will not be seen by us at all, as having its dark Hemisphere towards us, just as the Moon has at its Change: And if at the same Time it is in the Plane of the Ecliptick, or in its *Node*, then it is directly interposed between the Earth and the Sun, and will appear to Observers as a Spot in the Sun. When it has departed a little from the Sun towards the West, a small Part of its Hemisphere will begin to appear, but the greater Part remain still obscure; in this Case it will be cornuted like the New Moon at its first Appearance. In its farther Progress it will be daily more and more enlightened and appear therefore bigger with Respect to us, as the Moon does, till at last its whole Hemisphere appears to us enlightened, and then it is at the greatest Distance from us. After this it is easy to conceive what Variety of Faces it must undergo before it becomes wholly dark again, and has finished its periodical Course.

Q. Gentlemen, *I need not inform you, how much the* Italian *Music is encourag'd of late (I mean not the Instrumental) for that hath been so long and doubtless with much Reason) but the Vocal also. Now, I pretend to have some Tast in Music, but cannot be so delighted with their Vocal, because I cannot descern the Skill of their Masters in the Composure, by Reason I understand not the Language. Now, all that ever I convers'd with, are of my Opinion, that the greatest Beauties of Vocal Music consist in justly adapting the Notes and Strains to the Words and Sense; so that the Music ought not only to speak the very Words, but also their Affections (if I may so term it) That when the Words share Complainant, Majestical, Commandant, soft, persuasive, &c. the Music ought to be the same, and to put an Emphasis on the strongest part of the Sense. I have heard divers highly applaud the* Italian *Compositions of that kind,*

when

when I am sensible they understand the Language no more than I do, which is very unaccountable to me. Pray, inform me, Apollo, *if these People have any peculiar Ways to arrive to a Tast therein, that gives them so much Satisfaction, if such be attainable, you will very much oblige, by a Discovery of them,*

Your Humble Servant, &c.

A. 'Tis observable at Plays, where a Knot of Critics are got together, to pronounce the Fate of that at present perform'd, they shall be surrounded by the *wou'd-be-Wits*, who listen to their Sentence, and then tell it about the Town with much Assurance for their own. The next time it is plaid, they shall drag thither what Friends they can with them, and all along make their *borrow'd* Remarks upon them, tho' they really know no other Reason why they do so, then that they observ'd those who are allow'd Judgment, to have done the same: Thus it is with the *Italian Opera's*. Some few who have been in *Italy*, or rather a few of them who have been there, and have a just Tast in Music, pass their Sense on it, on which all the rest (who remark'd their Sentence) tell it about for their own, when the greatest part of those who cry up the *Italian* Compositions are so far from a true Tast in them, that did our own Masters set *Italian* Words, they wou'd not be capable without Information, to distinguish theirs from the *Italian Manner*. These Notions pass about more uncontroulable, because they come often from the *Fair Sex*; and tho' Men of Sense easily discover the Delusion, yet they are better bred than to detect it.

POEMS.

Q. *As all approach* APOLLO's *Shrine,*
Their future Fortunes to divine,
As well as present Doubts to ask,
For once I'll set the God *a Task.*
A Nymph *that's Witty, Fair and Kind*
With ev'ry Grace, to please my Mind;
Adorn'd by Nature and by Art,
With all, to captivate an Heart:
Hath long on mine a seizure made,
And Victory compleat display'd;
Nor have I Reason to complain,
Since my Address *is not in vain;*
For she at length to gracious proves,
As to confess herself, she Loves:
But ah! tho' she acknowledg'd this,
Far distant seems the promis'd Bliss,
For when Consent Paternal, I
Hop'd, and upon it did rely;
With Anger 'twas, and with a Frown
Deny'd, and all my Joys thrown down:
For in a Rage, my Cruel Sire,
(His Eyes ejecting Sparks of Fire)
Most solemnly and loudly swore,
If e'er I mov'd the Question more,
He wou'd renounce me for his Son,
And then I'm certainly undone:
But when his Passion was allay'd,
A kinder Aspect he display'd:
And said if you'll allow my Choice,
And join yours with your Father's Voice;
A Lady I will name with whom,
You will much happier become;
Since she has Beauty and Estate,
And's worthy'r of a nobler Mate.
My Fortune too shall added be,
When you and Cellida *agree:*
But if you Silvia *see again,*
All your Submission is in vain,
Yet you shall have what you deserve,
Which is to beg with her, or Starve,
For I'll disown you for my Son,
And fix all my Estate to run,
To other Heir, altho' he be,
My Profess'd, mortal Enemy.
With that he left me in a Rage,
And bid me weigh how I engage.
Indulgent God, *for pity's Sake,*
Inform what Courses I shall take;
If I to Silvia *false shall prove,*
False to my tender Vows of Love,
It will Dishonest be, and Base,
And insupportable Disgrace:
Nay, loaded with Dishonour, I
Shall drag a Life in Misery;
With endless Torments in my Breast,
Since she's of all my Heart possest:
And if my Sire *I disobey,*
We both are ruin'd too that Way,
For Silvia *(so hard is our Fate)*
Has ev'ry Blessing, but Estate.

A. Your *Sire* altho' he has the Pow'r,
To Disinherit you next Hour,
Yet *Heav'n* does not such Pow'r impart,
That he can disengage your Heart,
A *Negative* he only may
Pretend to, which you must obey.
Then since at present he denies
Consent and your Intreaties slies;
We only Patience can advise:
'Till Heav'n, in Pity to your State,
Has summon'd him, or chang'd your Fate.

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Note, All Letters with Questions, in all Arts and Sciences, whether Serious, Comical, or Humorous, both in Prose and Poetry, will be answered in their own Stiles and Manner; and great Care will be taken to answer all such as are worthy of the same, as soon as sent, by directing them for the *British Apollo*, to be left at *J. Mayo's* over against *Water-Lane, Fleet-Street*. *S. Clark*, Bookseller in *Burchin-Lane* near the *Royal-Exchange*, and *T. Harbin* at the *Rose*, over against the *King's Head-Inn* near *Charing-Cross*.

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